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Marian Philatelic Study Group of Coros, Whole No. 6

A. S. Horn

W. J. Hoffman

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Marian Philatelic Study Group of Coros

Rev. A. S. Horn, Chairman
W. J. Hoffman, Editor

Business Address: 9333 4th Avenue
Inglewood 4, California

Vol. 1 No. 6

May 1, 1963

NEW ISSUES

COLOMBIA: Issued Mar. 11, 1963, a two-stamp set commemorating Second Vatican Council, one of which depicts NUESTRA SENORA DE LA PENA, (Our Virgin of the Rock), in a Holy Family Group. The extraordinary beauty of this statuary group has drawn admiring exclamations: There is the majestic figure of the Holy Virgin, the uncommon and handsome face of St. Joseph, the Patriarch, appearing as though together they supported the Divine Child. The silver heart decorating the Virgin's chest is a repository wherein annually Colombian seminarists place their names. The figure of an angel, holding a monstrance is in the background. (Complete history and illustration on page 21).

SPAIN: Issued Mar. 24, 1963, 10 peseta value, red violet, IMMACULATE CONCEPTION by Jose de Ribera, known as "El Espanoleto" (1588-1656). This stamp included in a Stamp Day release of a 10-stamp series featuring Ribera's works.

SWITZERLAND: Feb. 4, 1963. Scott Nos. 398A and 399A. BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF EINSIEDLEN; her statue is in center over main entrance. The same design was used in the 1961 definitive issue for a 2 franc blue stamp, Scott No. 399.

RIO MUNI: Jan. 29, 1963. Scott Nos. 22-23. 2-stamp set. Father Horn informed us it looks as if these stamps do represent The Madonna and Child in native sculpture.

SPAIN - VALENCIA: Postal Cancellation. Special postal marks to be used May 11-13, 1963 in conjunction with a proclamation in honor of the SANTISIMA VIRGEN DE LOS DESAMPARADOS (Most Holy Virgin of the Abandoned), Patroness of Valencia.

COSTA RICA: This country overprinted the Christmas Issue of 1962 with new values, in red. Numbered in Scott's as RA-16.

PORTUGUESE INDIA: In 1959 this country overprinted the 1953 issue of native art picturing THE MADONNA, Scott No. 526. The overprint is Scott No. 594.

ETHIOPIA: Scott No. 399. Word has been received from Mr. Josef Franz Aumann, Vienna, Austria, that the Ethiopian Postal Administration informed him there is also a Madonna on the 50c stamp of the Ancient King Series, issued Nov. 2, 1962, depicting an old Madonna Icon of Byzantine style. No further data is available.

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

SPAIN: Presently scheduled for September 1963 issue, set of stamps in honor of The Madonna de la Merced, Patroness of the city of Barcelona.

Spain's 1963 Monasteries set will be devoted to the Monastery of Santa Maria de Barcelona which was founded by the Cistercian monks.

Mr. Eduard Ruttimann, Basel, Switzerland, notable International Madonna Collector and co-author with Father Anheuser, OFM, of MARIA KOENIGIN DER WELT, has informed us that Volume 2 of this work will be published in 1964. It will be larger than Volume 1 and will contain Marian cancellations.

Mr. Josef Franz Aumann, President of the International Federation of St. Gabriel has written us that articles appearing in the Marian Philatelic Study Group Bulletin will be registered in the GABRIEL INDEX.

J. H. Sauve was awarded a "Gold Medal Certificate" for his MARIAN STAMPS OF THE WORLD Exhibit at the EXUP-IX in Montreal, Feb. 15-17, 1963. His purely Marian exhibit (excluding churches, etc.) in blocks of 4s, contained some 2028 stamps.
CONGRATULATIONS.

NEW MEMBERS

- | | |
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OUR LADY OF PENA - FAMOUS SHRINE IN BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

The following was taken from a pamphlet prepared by the Shrine's Chaplain, Rev. Ricardo Struve Haker (also a Marian collector and Editor of "GABRIEL--LATINOAMERICANO"), giving an introduction to the Shrine for English visitors. Father Struve Haker has also prepared an illustrated guide (in three languages--English, French and Spanish), which contains some pictures of the works of art at the Shrine.



Colombia is a predominantly Catholic country; about 99% of its inhabitants profess the Roman Catholic religion. Therefore, Colombia possesses numerous places of pilgrimage, but one of the most famous is the SANTUARIO NACIONAL DE NUESTRA SENORA DE LA PENA. Its history dates from 1685. Its first Chaplain, Don Francisco Garcia de Villameva, was baptized in 1640, no more than 100 years after the city of Santa Fe de Bogota was founded by the conqueror Jimenez de Quesada. The church of La Pena played an important role in the events of Colombia's struggle for independence, since its Chaplain, Dr. Don J. Ignacio del Basto, was one of the men who signed the Independence Act on July 20, 1810.

The problem of a purely natural origin of these beautiful figures or of its supernatural origin will never be decided; Spanish people of the 17th century were highly mystical and quite possibly any one of the numerous artists could have carved these figures on one of the rocks of the Eastern mountain ranges of Bogota, but it is an absolute historical fact that at the end of the 17th century a modest, humble man of Bogota, Bernardino de Leon, on one of his excursions to the

mountains in search of Indian gold hidden during the years of the Spanish conquest, discovered these figures barely delineated on a rock, which today is distinguished by the reconstructed chapel seen on the hills back of the Sanctuary of La Pena. He carried the surprising news down to the city and shortly thereafter, in order to verify his story or ridicule his simplicity, many people went up into the hills and found the story was really true. As a result of the general enthusiasm, a small chapel soon was erected, holy Masses celebrated, and pilgrimages started to visit the statues, at that time still part of the rock, imploring heavenly aid. When the first Chaplain died in 1710 he left in his will sufficient means to build a bigger chapel, which unfortunately collapsed a year later due to an earthquake (1715).

Destruction seemed so complete that permission was obtained of ecclesiastical and civil authorities to have a stone mason cut and remove the figures from the rock; in an effort which almost exceeded the human forces of the time, the figures were brought down from the hills and are now in the Sanctuary. The famous Spanish artist, Pedro Laboria, in 1740, gave them their final and beautiful form seen today.

The 18th century propagated veneration of the "Holy Family of the Pena" in the entire country. The confraternity of the Pena numbered at this time about 30,000 members, comprising the territory of Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Ecuador. One of the many proofs for this assertion is the fact that Pope Benedict XIV granted to this Confraternity of La Pena a special papal bull; another proof could be deduced from the extensive list of jewelry pious persons donated to the Sanctuary, which today would be valued at almost 100,000 pesos but which unfortunately was lost towards the end of the 19th century when civil wars raged and religious spirit relaxed.

There has been a continuous tradition of the important role the Sanctuary played in the period of Independence. It is told that the republicans under Gen. Narino gathered in the Chaplain's house and their secret password was "The Holy Virgin of La Pena." The present chaplain is attempting to prove the scientific veracity of this tradition, and

at this point of historical research is authorized to confirm it for the following reasons: (1) The name of Chaplain Alvarez is found in the list of those republicans who signed the Independence Act of 1810; (2) When the Spanish Crown reconquered Bogota, Alvarez was thrown into jail for several months because of his suspicious activities during the preceding period; (3) Gen. Narino, after making certain the Republican Victory in 1813, ordered a general pilgrimage in thanksgiving to the "Holy Virgin of La Pena" for the victory obtained.

Despite the enthusiastic chaplains the Pena enjoyed during the 19th century, but due to the civil wars mentioned, veneration of this Sanctuary fell off considerably so that at the beginning of the 20th century even secular priests were reluctant to hold services at this famous pilgrimage shrine, and it passed first into the hands of the Capuchin Fathers, then for a trial period to the Trappist, up until 1944 when a new and vigorous resurrection began so that soon it will occupy its former place among the sanctuaries of Colombia.

At the height of the knees of these stone figures may be seen a horizontal cut in the stone, the explanation being that formerly these figures were clothed according to the 17th and 18th century customs, and it was only when this custom went out of fashion that the absence of the lower part of the bodies became apparent; at the beginning of our century the figures were completed with their lower members cut into the same kind of stone as the statues themselves.

Appreciation on Behalf of membership for financial assist to: Mrs. L. Larsen, Mrs. H. M. Hildebrandt, Joseph T. May, Rev. Clarence Manns, OFM, William Danbruski, A. J. Paruzynski, B. W. Bennawit, Diana Hope Helfrich.

MADONNA

BELGIUM: Large Orval Sht. "Belgique-Belgie" but perf., scarce (B303)\$10.00

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MONACO: 1958, 1 F imperf., trial-color, Scarce (412) \$ 9.75

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SPAIN: 1936 Barcelona, 5th Anniv. 5 value issue, complete \$12.00

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WHY POSTAL CANCELLATIONS?

W. J. Hoffman

We have been endeavoring to publish in the first year's issues of THE MARIAN PHILATELIC STUDY GROUP Bulletin some of the many phases of Madonna and/or Marian Philately. Our first issue listed the several categories of postal material which could have a place in a topical collection devoted to THE MADONNA.

It is only natural that we first collect the postage stamps since they are the foundation of the hobby, but there comes a time for all collectors when the collection is complete or fairly complete, except for those stamps which are prohibitive in price or difficult to locate, which eventually may be added to the collection. At this point other interests in the field of philately will attract our attention, and it is during this interim that a decision is made to expand into the field of specialization within our own topic. The area of a specialized Madonna and/or Marian collection encompasses the addition of errors and varieties on stamps, die proofs, color proofs, local issues, or philatelic material other than postage stamps. This last could include maximum cards, first day covers, postal cancellations, postmarks, postal meter cancellations, seals, etc. I am certain readers are fully cognizant of the cost of most of the postal errors and varieties to be found on stamps. This was one of the reasons for the decision made in this country to reprint the Dag Hammarskjold issue.

Because the field of collecting postal cancellations is considered a fairly new area in philately, prices of these items are not too prohibitive at the present time. We would suggest that any collector who now foresees that at some time in the future he will have to decide which fork in the road of philately to take in order to maintain interest in his hobby, ought to begin collecting these specialized items. A recent release by the British Postal Administration announced that country's authorizing "pictorial postmarks for tourist and prestige publicity." Other countries, notably Spain, Germany and Austria, have been using this type of cancellation since the 1940s; many of these are still readily available. We feel that the Postal Cancellation "New Issue Service" of the Marian Philatelic Study Group can be of great assistance to those who wish to avail themselves of its service.

Madonna and/or Marian postal cancellations are an ideal complement to a stamp collection which depicts the Blessed Virgin in Her many titles and roles. Many of the cancellations pictured in this issue repeat the design used on the postage stamp; many, too, display new titles and additional shrines and statues not previously commemorated nor widely known, while others display her in varying aspects of the same title: For example, the several representations of Our Lady of Montserrat, especially E-56M38 where the title of this shrine is graphically identified as being situated in the "mountains of saw teeth" (Mount-serrat), or "serrated mountains."

The following checklist of Madonna and Marian Postal Cancellations is being offered as a guide to those collectors who wish to follow within this field. We do not guarantee that the list is complete, and in this respect would appreciate hearing from those members who can add further items not here identified.

Grateful acknowledgement is given to Mr. Josef Franz Aumann for the listing of postal cancellations in his "Die Madonna Im Briefmarkenalbum." And to Rev. Ricardo Struve Haker for information gathered from "GABRIEL LATINOAMERICANO." Recent issues of "Die Samlerlupe" also assisted in this research. Except for Spain, all other items have been given an arbitrary numbering system since no official listing of all combined issues by these countries has been published. Illustrated items from Spain are listed by the ALFIL catalog numbers. ALFIL lists all Spanish commemorative postal cancellations by the following code:

- E - Espana (Spain)
- 56 - Year of Issue (i.e., 1956)
- M - Regular Mail; or A - Airmail
- 38 - Chronological number within the year of issue

The descriptive text for each item follows this format: Number in numerical sequence for each country; City and date of cancellation; Design incorporated in cancellation is written in CAPITAL LETTERS; Text of cancellation is within quotation marks; Other identification.

CHECKLIST OF MARIAN POSTAL CANCELLATIONS

Prepared by W. J. Hoffman

ARGENTINA

1. Buenos Aires, Oct. 5-12, 1947. VIRGIN OF LUJAN. "First National Marian Congress at Lujan." Strip cancellation.
 2. Buenos Aires, Dec. 25, 1959. STAR ABOVE MADONNA AND CHILD, LIGHTED CHRISTMAS CANDLE AT BOTTOM. Christmas wreath encircles text "Christmas Buenos Aires Argentina." Date of 25 December 1959 between Madonna and candle.
 3. Buenos Aires, Mar. 19-26, 1960. VIRGIN OF LUJAN. "150th Anniversary of the Revolution of May, Gabriel '60."
 4. Buenos Aires, Aug-Oct. 1960. VIRGIN OF LUJAN IN CENTER OF SMALL MISSIONARY CROSS. "Great Mission of Buenos Aires, October of 1960." Strip cancellation.
 5. Buenos Aires, Nov. 12, 1960. MADONNA IN STAINED GLASS WINDOW. "Marian Philatelic Emblem, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 12 Nov. 1960."
 6. Companion cancellation to above item. CATHEDRAL OF BUENOS AIRES DEDICATED TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN. "Marian Philatelic Emblem, Nov. 13, 1960."
- Note: Nos. 5 and 6 used Nov. 11-13, 1960. Also on cachets for "First Inter-American Marian Congress, Nov. 1960."
7. Buenos Aires, Nov. 12, 1960. SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF LUJAN. "12 Nov. 1960, First Day of Issue, Buenos Aires, Argentina." First Day of Issue of 1 peso stamp of Our Lady of Lujan.
 8. Buenos Aires, Dec. 25, 1960. CHURCH WITH BELL TOWER, BELL RINGING, STAR OF BETHLEHEM. "Merry Christmas" in German, French, English and Italian; at bottom "Merry Christmas" in Spanish.
 9. Buenos Aires, Dec. 15-17, 1961. NATIVITY SCENE, STAR OF BETHLEHEM. "Philatelic Symbol of Christmas."
 10. Moron, Nov. 7-17, 1961. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF BUEN VIAJE. "Marian Philatelic Emblem, Moron, Buenos Aires, Argentina." Title encircles head of Madonna. Commemorates Pontifical Coronation Nov. 19, 1961.
 11. Buenos Aires, May 12, 1962. VIRGIN OF LUJAN. "Buenos Aires 12 May 1962 Argentina." Commemorates 75th Anniversary of Pontifical Coronation of Our Lady of Lujan.

12. Cordoba, May 12, 1962. VIRGIN OF LUJAN. "Cordoba 12 May 1962 Argentina." Same as No. 10.
13. Buenos Aires, Dec. 7-9, 1962. MADONNA & CHILD by Rubens. "Christmas Philatelic Symbol, Buenos Aires, Argentina."

AUSTRIA

1. Vienna, Sept. 10, 1952. OUR LADY OF LOURDES. "I Am The Immaculate Conception, 20 year Parish Maria Lourdes."
2. Mariazell, 1953. MADONNA. "Entrust your fate to our Holy Mother." Strip cancellation.
3. Mariazell, May 2, 1954. MADONNA, COAT OF ARMS of KAJ and Austrian Federal States. "Mary, Patroness of Austria."
4. Innsbruck, May 8-Sept. 9, 1954. TORCH WITH CROSS AND CROWN. "Young troops bring the light from Lourdes."
5. Linz, May 16, 1954. Picture and text same as No. 4.
6. Graz, May 22, 1954. Picture and text same as No. 4.
7. Vienna, May 22, 1954. Picture and text same as No. 4.
8. Vienna, Dec. 8, 1954. IMMACULATA. "100 Years Dogma of The Immaculate Conception, 1854-1954." Blue postal cancellation.
9. Maria Taferl, May 30, 1955. PIETA. "Devotion to Mary in the entire world. Closing of the traveling exhibit of postage stamps."
10. Mariazell, May 1, 1957. MADONNA WITHOUT MANTLE. "Beginning of the 800-year celebration of the Madonna at Mariazell, 1157-1957, Marian Philatelic Exhibition."
11. Mariazell, June 22, 1957. MADONNA BEFORE SILHOUETTE OF SHRINE. "800 Years Mariazell." Blue postal cancellation.
12. Vienna, June 22, 1957. Picture and text same as No. 11. Black postal cancellation.
13. Mariazell, Sept. 8-15, 1957. MADONNA. "Feast Week 800 years Mariazell."
14. Mariazell, 1957. MADONNA, CHURCH, MAP OF AUSTRIA. "800 Years Mariazell 1157-1957." Strip cancellation.

15. Vienna, Mar. 24, 1958. ANNUNCIATION. "St. Gabriel, Patron of Mails and Philatelists."
16. Vienna, Nov. 15-16, 1958. CROWNED MADONNA & CHILD, DUKE HENRY OFFERING MODEL OF ABBEY, ANGEL WITH STREAMER 1158-1958. "800 Years Schotten Abbey in Vienna."
17. Vienna, Nov. 29-Dec. 2, 1958. NATIVITY SCENE, STAR OF BETHLEHEM. "Postage Stamp and Creche Show."
18. Innsbruck, 1959. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION STATUE TOP OF ST. ANNE'S COLUMN. "Innsbruck-Congress City." Machine cancellation.
19. Mariazell, 1960. MADONNA. "Entrust your fate to our Great Mother." Picture and text in right hand corner.
20. Zirl, Sept. 20, 1960. HOLY FAMILY. "The Crib Village."
21. Heidebodens, Oct. 1960. OUR LADY'S CHURCH. "Pilgrimage Place of Heidebodens."
22. Lanzendorfe, Feb. 14, 1961. SHRINE BASILICA OF MARIA LANZENDORFE. "800 Years of Pilgrimage to Maria Lanzendorfe, 6 kilometers south of Vienna." Strip cancellation.
23. Innsbruck, Mar. 24, 1961. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION STATUE TOP OF ST. ANNE'S COLUMN, ST. GABRIEL, ST. JOHN CAPISTRANO. "St. Gabriel, Patron of Mails; St. John Capistrano, Apostle of Europe-Philatelic Exhibition."
24. Vienna, Mar. 24, 1962. THE ANNUNCIATION. "Austrian Philatelic Society of St. Gabriel."
25. Salzburg, 1960. No picture. "Marian Secretariat." Red; private cancellation.

BELGIUM

1. Hasselt, Aug. 15-22, 1954. MADONNA WITH CHILD AND SCEPTRE. "City of Hasselt." Companion rubber hand stamp.
2. Genval, 1960-61. MEDALLION WITH MADONNA AND CHILD, CROSS AND MOON. "The Small Apostle of Mary" (in French). Red; private cancellation.
3. Same as No. 2 except "De Kleine Apostel van Maria" (in Dutch).
4. Genval, 1961. MEDALLION WITH MADONNA AND CHILD, CROSS AND MOON. "The Marist Brothers in Red China." Private cancellation.
5. Genval, 1961. MARY WITH CHILD, BOOK. "Publisher, Mary Mediatrix." Private cancellation.
6. Hasselt, 1961. No picture. "Aug. 6-20, 1961. Seventh Yearly Feast at Hasselt."

7. Hasselt, Aug. 6, 1961. MADONNA & CHILD. "Philatelic Stamp Exhibition-Feast of The Virgin of Jesse." (Note: This statue called 'The Virgin of Jesse' since Jesse was father of King David, royal forefather of Blessed Mother.)
8. Gent, May 31, 1962. OUR LADY OF BELLEM. "Madonna Pilgrimage, First Day Exhibition."

BRAZIL

1. Rio de Janeiro, Sept. 8, 1954. Center of cancellation has monogram 'AM' surrounded by rays in starburst pattern. Outer ring reads "Patroness of Brazil-8 Sept. 1954-Rio de Janeiro, Brazil." Inner ring reads "Centenary of the Proclamation of The Immaculate Conception of Our Lady."
2. Campanha, M.G., Aug. 16, 1954. CROSS WITH STAR AND MONOGRAM 'AM', CROSS OF THORNS. "Fifth Centenary Our Lady of Zion College."
3. Sao Paulo, Sept. 8, 1954. OUR LADY OF APARECIDA. "Congress of The Patroness of Brazil." Issued to publicize Marian Year.
4. Sao Paulo, Sept. 12, 1956. INITIALS 'JMC' (Mary Immaculate Conception). "Archdiocesan Seminary 1856-1956."
5. Teofilo Otoni, June 29-July 27, 1957. No picture. "Centenary of Patroness of The Immaculate Conception."
6. Espirito Santo, Feb. 11, 1959. PRIEST SHOWING TWO INDIAN CHILDREN PICTURE OF OUR LADY OF PENHA. "IV Centenary, Chegada, Brazil, Fra. Pedro Palacios, OFM, Founder of Convent of Our Lady of Penha."

CANADA

1. Quebec, Oct. 7, 1961. Notre Dame du Cap. OUR LADY OF THE CAPE. Red meter cancellation.
2. Quebec, Oct. 7, 1961. Notre Dame du Cap. ORIGINAL SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF THE CAPE. "Sanctuary National Shrine." Red meter cancellation.

CUBA

1. Havana, Sept. 8, 1956. VIRGIN OF CHARITY OF EL COBRE. "First Day of Issue."

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

1. Prague, Sept. 7, 1945. No picture. "Marian Pilgrimage Holy House of Loreto."
2. Prague, Sept. 12, 1946. MADONNA AND CHILD. "Prague Marian Pilgrimage Holy House of Loreto." Auto delivery.

DENMARK

1. Saeby, May 31, 1961. MADONNA WITH CHILD OVER HALF MOON. "Saeby particularly is worth a vacation." Machine cancellation.
2. Thisted, Oct. 7, 1962. THISTED MADONNA. "Thisted 7-10-62 1937-1962 Philatelic Club." Used one day only.

ECUADOR

1. Quayquil, Apr. 27, 1958. SORROWFUL MOTHER'S HEART PIERCED WITH SEVEN SWORDS OVER CROWN OF THORNS. "First Day Issue." Same design on postage stamp commemorating the Sorrowful Mother of San Gabriel College.

FRANCE

1. Lourdes, 1956. No picture. "Lourdes World Pilgrimage Center." Machine cancelled; flag to right.
2. Lourdes, 1957. Same as No. 1.
3. Lourdes, 1958. Same as No. 1 except flag to left.
4. Lourdes, 1958. LOURDES BASILICA IN LANDSCAPE PICTURE. "Centenary 1858-1958 of the Apparitions, Lourdes." Meter cancellation.
5. Lourdes, 1960. LOURDES BASILICA IN LANDSCAPE PICTURE. "World Pilgrimage Center." Machine cancelled; flag to left.
6. Paris, 1961. INITIALS 'JM' WITH CROWN. "The Queen's Review, Marian Monthly, 78 rue de la Tombe-Issoire, Paris 14, Pelerinages Monfortains." Red; private meter cancellation.
7. Lisieux, Apr. 10, 1961. CATHEDRAL OF LISIEUX. "Lisieux July 1961 National Marian Congress." Red; companion cancellation.
8. Le Puy, 1957. There is a machine cancellation from Le Puy in Velay but no details are available.

GERMANY

1. Schmölln (Thür.) 1938. ENTHRONED MADONNA & Child. "600 Anniversary-Philatelic Exhibition July 9-17, 1938."
2. Munich, Aug. 30-Sept. 8, 1947. OUR LADY, PATRONESS OF BAVARIA. "Philatelic Exhibition for benefit of Bavarian Red Cross."
3. Munich, Oct. 29-Nov. 21, 1947. OUR LADY OF CZESTOCHOWA. "Exhibition of Polish work in foreign countries."
4. Jungingen (Hohenz) 1947-48-49. MADONNA WITH CHILD AND SCEPTRE. "Pilgrimage Place of Our Lady of Einsiedeln."
5. Burg, Bez, Magdeburg, 1948. MADONNA AND CHILD (design from the city coat of arms). "948-1948 1000 Anniversary."

6. Altötting, 1948-1953. MADONNA ABOVE PILGRIMAGE CHURCH. "Bavaria's largest pilgrimage place."
7. Altötting, 1950-1960. Same as No. 6 except machine cancelled, Type A, flag to left.
8. Altötting, 1954. Same as No. 6 except machine cancelled, Type B, flag to right.
9. Altötting, July 13, 1952. OUR LADY OF ALTÖTTING ABOVE PILGRIMAGE SHRINE. "Workmen's Pilgrimage." Machine cancelled, Type A.
10. Bischofsheim (Rhine). From 1952. PIETA. "Old Wood Carving City."
11. Bogen, From 1951. MADONNA IN WREATH OF RAYS. "Visit The Pilgrimage Place Bogen Mountain."
12. Arnsberg (Westfalen), 1958-59-60-61. IMMACULATA. "City Administration Marian Hospital." Red; private cancellation.
13. Oberhausen (Rhineland), Oct. 5-7, 1957. IMMACULATA IN FRONT OF CHURCH. "100 Years St. Mary's."
14. Lechenich-Blessem, 1959-60-61. MADONNA WITH CHILD AND SCEPTRE. "Marian Hospital." Red; private cancellation.
15. Starnberg, 1958-61. MADONNA. "Starnberger Art Publication." Red; private cancellation.
16. Wertenstein, May 26, 1960. PIETA. "Marian Postal Exhibition at Wertenstein, May 26, 1960." Companion cancellation.
17. Altötting, June 20, 1960. OUR LADY OF ALTÖTTING ABOVE PILGRIMAGE SHRINE. "Bavaria's Greatest Pilgrimage Place." Left portion of two-part cancellation.
18. Altötting, 1961. Text same as No. 6; drawing changed. Machine cancellation.
19. Altötting. OUR LADY OF ALTÖTTING. "Establishment of Bishop's Administration of The Holy Chapel." Companion cancellation.
20. Cologne, Mar. 25-26, 1960. MADONNA WITH CHILD, ST. HERMAN JOSEPH. "Junior Achievement Show, Collector's Guild St. Gabriel."
21. Munich, 1960-61. MADONNA WITH CHILD IN SEAL OF UNIVERSITY. "Polyclinic of University of Munich." Red; private cancellation.
22. Bayrish Gmain, 1961. No picture. "In the Queen's Service, Marian Secretariat." Red; private cancellation.
23. Essen, Mar. 25-26, 1961. GOLDEN MADONNA. (Patroness of Ruhr Diocese of Essen.) "Regional Stamp Exhibition Ruhr District Branch Collector's Guild St. Gabriel."

- ~~24.~~ Bendorf (Rhine) Sayn, From 1961. OUR LADY OF THE GOOD PATH and FLEUR DE LIS. "Boy Scout Camp Brexbachtal 1961."
25. Bogen, 1961. MADONNA OF BOGEN MOUNTAIN with COAT OF ARMS OF DISTRICT OF BOGEN. "Visit the District of Bogen (Bayr Wald) Home of the Bavarian Coat of Arms of Raute." Red; private meter cancellation from land office of Bogen.
- ~~26.~~ Werl (Westfalen). July 24, 1961. OUR LADY OF WERL. "Werl Pilgrimage." Companion cancellation.
- ~~27.~~ Werl (Westfalen), July 24, 1961. OUR LADY OF WERL. "Werl Pilgrimage-300 years 1661-1961." Machine cancellation.
- ~~28.~~ Speyer, Sept. 10, 1961. MADONNA & CHILD IN FRONT OF SPEYER CATHEDRAL. "900th Year Jubilee of The Cathedral." (Four crowns above and below The Madonna.)
- ~~29.~~ Herford, Dec. 3, 1961. MADONNA TO LEFT OF CLIMBING VINE. "Vision of Our Lady of Herford." - "49 Herford-Collectors Guild of St. Gabriel."
30. Obergrombach, June 6, 1962. MADONNA AND CHILD, CHURCH. "Wine and Excursion Resort."
- ~~31.~~ Beltheim, Sept. 18, 1962. MADONNA. "Blue Army of Mary. A Praying World is a United World." Red; meter cancellation.

HUNGARY

1. Szabadka, Apr. 20, 1941. MADONNA IN COAT OF ARMS. "Vissza tert" (Commemorating return of territory to Hungary.) Additional official cancellation.
2. Eger, Sept. 21, 1947. OUR LADY, PATRONESS OF HUNGARY CROWNED WITH CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN IN FRONT OF HUNGARIAN PATRIARCHAL CROSS. "Eger Feast Day of Our Great Lady."
3. Mariagyud, June 6, 1948. MADONNA ABOVE PILGRIMAGE CHURCH. "1148 Jubilee of Pilgrimage Place of Mariagyud 1948-Holy Virgin of Mariagyud Help Us Hungarians."
4. Budapest, Szeged, Vezprem, Sept. 22, 1942. MARIAN MONOGRAM IN LATIN AND GREEK LETTERS. "1642-1942 Magyar Piaristak" (Hungarian White Fathers). Deals with series of hand cancellations which were in operation in various postoffices.

ITALY

1. Rome, Dec. 12, 1954. No picture. "Marian Year Philatelic Symbol."
2. Milan, 1957. MADONNA. "Pilgrimage Paulini." Red; private cancellation.

3. Bologna, Aug. 1956. MADONNA & CHILD. "Basilica of The Blessed Virgin of St. Luke." Companion rubber stamp.
4. Savona, 1958. OUR LADY OF SORROWS. "Basilica of Our Lady of Sorrows - Savona." Companion rubber stamp.
5. Tignale, 1957. MADONNA OF MONTECASTELLO. "Sanctuary of Montecastello, Tignale." Companion rubber stamp.
6. Bergamo, 1958. No picture. "Sanctuary of The Virgin of The Rose." Companion rubber stamp.
7. Cuneo, Feb. 6, 1957. No picture. "Sanctuary of Our Lady at Vico." Postal cancellation.

PHILIPPINES

- ~~1.~~ Cebu City, Nov. 27, 1954. No picture. "Attend the Cebu Marian Congress." Meter cancellation.
- ~~2.~~ Manila, May 12, 1954. No picture. "2nd National Congress of the Philippines 1854-1954, Peace through Mary." Meter cancellation.
- ~~3.~~ Manila, Dec. 30, 1954. No picture. "Commemorating Marian Year 1854-1954." Green. Companion cancellation.

PORTUGAL

- ~~1.~~ Fatima, Oct. 13, 1957. OUR LADY OF FATIMA. "40th Anniversary of Apparition of Our Lady of The Rosary."
- ~~2.~~ Vila Vicosa, Dec. 8, 1957. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. "Patroness of Portugal, Vila Vicosa." Special cancellation to commemorate Our Lady under this title as Patroness of Portugal.
- ~~3.~~ Sameiro, Braga, May 31, 1958. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MOUNT SAMEIRO. "Our Lady of The Immaculate Conception of Mount Sameiro-31 May 1958, Sameiro, Braga, CTT." Commemorating the Day of Our Lady of Sameiro.

SAAR

1. Blieskastel (Saar), 1933. MADONNA OF BLIESKASTEL. "700 Years Madonna of The Arrows." (Same design used on Saar stamps, Scott Nos. 118-119.)
2. Blieskastel (Saar). No picture. "Pilgrimage to The Madonna of The Arrows." Private hand stamp.

SPAIN

- El OM1 Zaragossa, 1940. No picture. "19th Centennial Virgen del Pilar."
- El OM2 Zaragossa, 1940. No picture. "Certified, 19th Centenary Virgen del Pilar."

- ElOM3 Zaragossa, 1940. No picture. "Airmail 19th Centenary Virgen del Pilar."
- ElOM4 Zaragossa, 1940. No picture. "Airmail 19th Centenary Virgen del Pilar, Certified."
- El6M17 Zaragossa, Oct.12-19,1946. BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF THE PILAR. "Philatelic Journeys of Zaragossa."
- El6M17a Zaragossa, Oct.12,1946. Same as above except "Oct. 18, 1936."
- El7A1 Madrid, Jan.1,1947. OUR LADY OF LUJAN & TWO AIRPLANES. "First airmail flight Madrid-Buenos Aires." (Not a postal cancellation but regular postmark.Used in Madrid Jan.1,1947. No philatelic announcement made; used for regular mail.) Red.
- 8/ El7M23 Barcelona, Nov.29-Dec.10,1947. No picture. "International Congress of Marian Congregations."
- 9/ El1M33 Gijon, Dec.23-24,1951. MADONNA & CHILD BETWEEN STAR & CROWN. "Exposition of Religious Art of The Nativity-Gijon."
- 10 El5M24 Zaragossa, July 24-27,1954. DOME OF BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF THE PILAR & BRIDGE OVER RIVER EBRO. "15th Esperanto Congress, Zaragossa."
- 11 El5M32 Toro, Sept.5,1954. VIRGIN DEL CANTO. "Coronation of The Virgen del Canto-Toro."
- 12/ El5M39 Zaragossa, Oct.7-12,1954. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION. "National Marian Congress Zaragossa."
- 13/ El5M41 Vitoria, Oct.7-12,1954. VIRGEN BLANCA. "Coronation of The Virgen Blanca - Vitoria."
- 14/ El5M44 San Martin de Provencals, Nov.11-15, 1954. PROFILE BUST OF OUR LADY OF MONT-SERRAT. "Philatelic Exposition, San Martin de Provencals."
- 15/ El5M46 Madrid, Dec.24,1954. BUST OF VIRGEN BETWEEN TWO STARS. "Commemorating the completion of First Day of Issue of Marian Year Series."
- 16/ El5M6 Cartagena, Apr.17,1955. VIRGEN DE LA CARIDAD (Charity). "Coronation of The Virgen de la Caridad - Cartagena."
- 17/ El5M16 Belaguer, May 28-30,1955. VIRGEN DEL MILAGRO (miracle). "Coronation of The Virgen del Milagro - Belaguer."
- 18/ El5M31 Elche, Aug.14-15,1955. OUR LADY OF ELCHE BETWEEN TWO ANGELS. "13th Century Mystery Play-Mystery of Elche."
- 19/ El56M5 Olesa de Montserrat, Mar.4, 1956. THREE MARYS AT FOOT OF CROSS. "Presentation of The Passion at Olesa."
- 20/ El56M13 Fregenal de la Sierra, Apr.27, 1956. OUR LADY DE LOS REMEDIOS. "Golden Anniversary of the Coronation of Our Lady de los Remedios."
- 21/ El56M37 Montblanch, Sept.8-9,1956. VIRGEN DE LA SIERRA MONTBLANCH, CITY WALLS. "50th Anniversary, Coronation of The Virgin of the mountain-Montblanch."
- 22/ El56M38 Montserrat, Sept.8-11,1956. HAND SAW OVER MOUNTAIN PEAKS (Seal of the Monastery.) "75th Anniversary Coronation of Our Lady of Montserrat."
- 23/ El57M8 Talavera de La Reina, May 30,1957. VIRGEN DEL PRADO. "Coronation of The Virgen del Prado."
- 24/ El57M25 Sans-Hostafranchs (Barcelona), Aug. 24-28,1957. MADONNA AGAINST SCROLL BACKGROUND. "Philatelic Exposition-Sans-Hostafranchs."
- 25/ El57M28 No city. Sept. 6-9,1957. OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE. "Fiestas of Our Lady of Guadalupe."
- 26/ El57M43 Barcelona, Dec.27-31,1957. HOLY FAMILY AND STAR OF BETHLEHEM. "Third International Creche Congress, Barcelona."
- 27 El57M43a Same as above except broken die; see illustration.
- 28/ El58M13 Estella, May 23-25,1958. OUR LADY OF PUY. "Coronation of Our Lady of Puy". (Between two stars.)
- 29/ El59M1 Andujar, Mar.18,1959. SHRINE OF THE VIRGIN DE LA CABEZA. "Jubilee Year Virgin de la Cabeza."
- 30 El59M31 La Bisbal (Gerona), Aug.15-22,1959. THE VIRGIN. "Philatelic Exposition."
- 31/ El60M39 La Coruna, Sept.11,1960. OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY. "Coronation of Our Lady of The Rosary."
- 32/ El61M3 Valls, Feb.2-5,1961. VIRGEN DE LA CANDELA. "Philatelic Exposition - Fiestas Candelá."
- 33/ El61M12 Barcelona, Apr.27-30,1961. PROFILE BUST OF OUR LADY OF MONTSERRAT. "Confraternity of Our Lady of Montserrat, Philatelic Exposition."
- 34/ El61M24 Jaen, June 11,1961. VIRGEN DE LA CAPILLA (little chapel). "Jubilee Year of The Virgen de la Capilla." (Year closed June 11, 1962.)

- ³⁵ B61M4 Zaragossa, Sept.21-24,1961. BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF THE PILAR, MONOGRAM 'JHS' IN CIRCLE WITH CROSS. "Fifth National Eucharistic Congress." ³⁶ Number Jaen, June 9-11,1962. VIRGEN DE LA not CAPILLA. "Marian Philatelic Exposition." (Commemorating close of Jubilee Year.) ³⁷ " Barcelona, June 27-29,1962. OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP. "Philatelic Exposition for Insurance Underwriters."

SWITZERLAND

1. Fribourg, July 8, 1957. MADONNA & CHILD. "800th Anniversary-Exposition of Art and History." Meter cancellation.
2. Swiss Motor Coach Service, Sept.15,1957. EINSIEDELN MADONNA. "International Philatelic Exhibition of stamps with religious motives-Maria Einsiedeln." Additional official cancellation.
3. Swiss Motor Coach Service, Apr.1,1958. HEAD OF GIRL AND BLAURING MONOGRAM."25 Years 1933-1958 Blauring Associate Meeting-Einsiedeln." (Blauring Associate is Catholic Girls Sodality; Monogram: Ring around M symbolizing keeping together through Mary.)
4. Bethlehem, Dec.31,1960. MADONNA RIDING DONKEY. No text.
5. Einsiedeln, Sept.6,1957. BASILICA OF EINSIEDELN. "1000th Year of Pilgrimage-Einsiedeln." Companion cancellation pictures OUR LADY OF EINSIEDELN without mantle and same text as No.2.

TURKEY

1. Ephesus, Dec.8,1962. OUR LADY OF THE HOUSE OF EPHESUS or OUR LADY OF THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL. "Virgin Mary Day-First Day of Issue."

VIET NAM

1. Saigon, Dec.25,1958. CATHEDRAL OF HUE dedicated to Our Lady. (Her statue is between the two towers depicted on the stamps, Scott Nos.100 and 107. A Cross replaces statue on cancellation.) "NHA THO PHU-CAM. NGAY PHAT-HANH, DAU TIEN." Issued to commemorate First Day of Sale of above-mentioned stamps.

UNITED STATES -- Meter Cancellations

1. New York, 1954. No picture. "Marian Year, Fly KLM to Rome." Blue.
2. Burbank, California. No picture. "The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima." Issued by Warner Bros. Studios for release of the movie of same title.
3. Inglewood, California, Dec.25,1962. OUR LADY OF PHILATELY. "Our Lady of Philately." Blue. Issued by Marian Philatelic Study Group of COROS.

4. Lemont, Illinois. Date of first use not available. MARY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS and MONOGRAM 'MARIA'. Used by Ave Maria Printery, Franciscan Fathers. Red.
5. New York City. PRAYING HANDS. "Pray to Our Lady for Peace." Used by John J. Crawley & Co., Inc., New York City. Blue
6. Arlington, Virginia. OUR LADY OF THE IMMACULATE HEART. "Serving God in the Missions Around the World." Blue. Used by MISSIONHURST at Arlington, Virginia.
7. Los Angeles, California. THE IMMACULATE HEART. "Please save cancelled stamps for The Immaculate Heart Missions." Red.
8. Stockbridge, Massachusetts. PRAYING HANDS HOLDING ROSARY. "Pray The Rosary Daily-Marian Helpers." Marian Fathers of Stockbridge; red.
9. Reno, Nevada. No picture. "Pray the Rosary." Office of The Bishop of Reno. Green.
10. Reno, Nevada. THREE MAGI AND STAR OF BETHLEHEM. "Peace on Earth to Men of Good Will." Office of The Bishop of Reno. Green.
11. Toledo, Ohio, Dec.15,1958. NATIVITY. "Keep Christ in Christmas." Red.
12. Tiffin, Ohio, Dec.16,1960. ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS. "Keep Christ in Your Christmas." Sisters of Mercy. Red.
13. Minneapolis, Minnesota, Dec.18, 1957. NATIVITY. "Keep Christ in Your Christmas." Red.
14. Butler, Pennsylvania, Dec.17,1956. OUR LADY OF GRACE. "The Family That Prays Together, Stays Together." A. F. Greci, 136 Standard Ave. Blue.
15. Peoria, Illinois. December 1962. NATIVITY. "Keep Christ in Your Christmas." Red.

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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

This is our first ad in the MARIAN PHILATELIC STUDY GROUP BULLETIN. We hope you will find our contributions informative and our services useful.

Our inventory of stamps is highly specialized. We deal in complete mint sets of Vatican City, The Madonna Topic, and The Christmas Topic. Because of this, our stock is comprehensive. We have over 95% of the Scott listed sets.

We have entered the field of Spanish Local Madonnas, and plan to make offerings next summer. There is such a short supply of these, both here and abroad, that our offerings will be limited by our success in searching.

In general, we would like our customers to see our stamps before paying. It is our practice to pay the postage both ways when we send out on approval. Many customers send us lists of sets they would like to see.

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ARGENTINA #1



PRIMER CONGRESO
MARIANO NACIONAL
LUJAN-5 AL 12
DE OCTUBRE DE 1947



ARG. #2



ARGENTINA #3

GRAN MISION
DE BUENOS AIRES
OCTUBRE DE 1960



ARGENTINA #4



ARGENTINA #5



ARGENTINA #7



ARGENTINA #6



ARGENTINA #8



ARGENTINA #9



ARG. #11



ARG. #12



ARG. #13



ARGENTINA #10



AUSTRIA #2



AUS. #3



AUS. #4



AUS. #8



AUS. #10



AUS. #11



AUS. #12



AUS. #14



AUS. #19



AUS. #13



AUS. #15



AUS. #17



AUS. #16



AUS. #22



AUS. #18



CANADA #2



AUS. #20



AUS. #21



AUS. #24



Notre-Dame du Cap
Reine du Très Saint Rosaire
Madone Nationale du Canada



AUS. #23



BRAZIL #1



BELGIUM #7

CANADA #1



BELGIUM #8



DENMARK #2



GERMANY #2



GERMANY #3



GERMANY #6



GERMANY #10



GERMANY #11



DENMARK #1



GERMANY #17



GERMANY #20



GERMANY #24



GERMANY #26



FRANCE #1



GERMANY #16



GERMANY #23



GERMANY #28



GERMANY #29



GERMANY #30



FRANCE #3



GERMANY #27



GERMANY #31



FRANCE #4



ITALY #6



ITALY #7



PHILIPPINES #1



PHILIPPINES #2



PHILIPPINES #3



SAAR #2



PORTUGAL #1



PORTUGAL #2



PORTUGAL #3



PORTUGAL #4



PORTUGAL #5



PORTUGAL #6



PORTUGAL #7



PORTUGAL #8



PORTUGAL #9



PORTUGAL #10



PORTUGAL #11



PORTUGAL #12



PORTUGAL #13



PORTUGAL #14

VIRGEN DE LA CAPILLA-PATRONESS OF JAEN

Spain: Postal Cancellation, June 11, 1961
and June 9-11, 1962

This statue is very ancient and derives its name from a primitive "chapel" or Sanctuary where it was originally venerated.

The area of the city of Jaen lay in the advanced frontier of the Kings of Castile and suffered continuous assaults by the Moors, who, encouraged by the internal strife of the Court of Juan II, fought to regain this border territory. No assistance was given to the people who were heroically resisting the Moors. Rare was the night when the Moors did not attack the outskirts, sacking, robbing and taking captive the inhabitants from their homes. Finally, drained of all resources of resistance, and utterly fatigued, they agreed to abandon the city. At midnight, Saturday, June 10, 1430, there appeared a brilliant cortege, walking about the suburbs of San Ildefonso and illuminating the area with a blinding light. The cortege was led by seven youths in white tunics, bearing brilliant crosses, followed by a group of celestial courtiers; behind them came the Holy Virgin holding the Infant in Her arms, and followed by a squadron of armed soldiers. The procession finally disappeared into the wall of San Ildefonso Church (now a Sanctuary.)

Eye witnesses to this phenomena declared their testimony before proper authorities and a notary; this original testimonial document is preserved by the National Historical Archives and is dated June 13, 1430.

The people came to give thanksgiving at the site of the "White Cortege" and to build a chapel as testimony of the miracle, and placed within the chapel an old statue then being venerated in the church of San Ildefonso.

"Descenales" means appearing on the "same date and day", and on Sunday, June 11, 1930, Jaen established the Jubilee Year celebration, thus coinciding with the same date and day of the week as that on which the miracle occurred.

On June 11, 1961 Jaen began solemn ceremonies for this great commemoration and ended them on June 11, 1962. The Director General of Posts permitted the use of a specific postmark commemorating this event.

VIRGEN DE LA CANDELLA - VALLS

Spain: Postal Cancellation, Feb.2-5, 1961

It is not known with any certainty the era of this statue. In the founding document of the "Descenales Fiesta", initiated on Jan.28, 1791, it is stated that the faithful of Valls had a devotion to Our Lady since 1117 when the Moors besieged the city. Since antiquity she has been called VIRGEN DE LA CANDELLA because she holds a candle in her right hand.

In 1348 Valls was saved from a plague that scourged Europe. Historians paint a desolate picture of it; city and country were so afflicted that sufficient cemeteries were lacking to inter the dead. The Vallenses sought the intercession of LA VIRGEN DE LA CANDELLA and were miraculously freed from the plague. The protection of the Virgin continued on additional occasions when the plague struck again--1522, 1530, 1589 and 1651.

In 1687 Valls was invaded by locusts; after laborious and exhausting work, and still unable to check the locusts, the people petitioned The Virgin to aid them, and formed a procession to all the churches. The plague disappeared and the people of Valls, in gratitude and love of their Virgin, initiated the "Candella Fiesta" on Jan. 28, 1791. Coronation of LA VIRGEN DE LA CANDELLA occurred Feb. 2, 1911.

During this Fiesta, Valls is decorated beautifully in honor of its Patroness, and perpetuates its present day Fiesta with special postal cancellations bearing a sketch of this Virgin.

INNSBRUCK: MADONNA TOP OF ST.ANNE'S COLUMN Postal Cancellations - 1959 and 1961

Called "Annasaule" (St.Anne's Column) this monument was erected by the Tyrol Diet in 1703 to commemorate the liberation of the Tyrol from the Bavarian army of invaders who occupied the greater part of the province during Wars of the Spanish Succession. The column is located half way down Maria-Theresien-Strasse, in the middle of the street, and named "St.Anne's Column" because the Tyrol was liberated on July 26th--St. Anne's Feast Day. The marble statue on top of the column is not one of St.Anne, as one might suppose, but is a MADONNA.

THE MYSTERY OF ELCHE

Spain: Portal Cancellation, Aug. 14-15, 1955

The "mystery" is one of the few examples of medieval religious drama which has survived. Known as "The Mystery of Elche" it has been performed annually since medieval times on and immediately before the Feast of The Assumption, Aug. 13, 14, 15. The 13th century play has the distinction of being the only remaining work of that period which was sung in its entirety. If not the world's first opera, it is the forerunner of present day opera which did not appear until three centuries later in Italy. The text is written in old Valencian dialect and the Gregorian chants and troubadour melodies which complement it produce a beautiful effect. All the roles are performed by the men and boys of Elche, except that of St. Peter, which is reserved for a priest. Participation in EL MISTERIO is naturally considered a great privilege. It has become tradition for fathers to pass the melodies on to their sons. Although a score does exist, the majority of the performers know nothing of music. The lyrical drama, which lasts some 3 hours, is performed in its entirety in St. Mary's Basilica on Aug. 13th; only the first part is given on the 14th, and the second part on the 15th.

The town also celebrates the Feast of its Patron, St. Anthony, on Aug. 13 and fireworks are in order. When the clock strikes midnight, city lights go out and a giant firecracker is released; there follows a fireworks display.

In the morning, after parades and processions, the stage is set for the performance. The theme is simple: It is based on the death and Assumption of the Virgin. The staging, however, is complex and at times breathtaking.

A vast stage is set above the spectators under the cupola; a sloping ramp extends the length of the church from the stage to the central door through which most of the participants exit and enter. The ramp affords unusual staging effects for the colorful processions throughout the play. A piece of staging causing considerable excitement is the ARACELLI, a large round object which opens and closes, rising and descending several times during the play, bearing angels and finally the Virgin on her ascent into heaven. This is most impressive. On its final ascent, before the ARACELLI reaches the dome,

it opens and a group representing the Trinity emerges and bestows a celestial crown on the Virgin. At this point, the spectators are unable to further suppress their emotions and break into loud applause and shouts of joy as a rain of gold dust falls on them. (From the Spring 1962 issue of CATHOLIC TRAVELER.)

..submitted by Mr. & Mrs. F.H. Benjert..

OUR LADY OF BELLEM

Belgium: Postal Cancellation, May 31, 1962

In Bellem, a small parish of East Flanders, whose name derives from Bethlehem, there was since the year 1100 a small chapel of Our Lady, and later a church was built. The story of the present statue, made of oak wood, began in a pilgrimage place south of Brussels. In 1635 a pious man hung a small statue of Our Lady on a large oak tree, which up to then was known as "Devil's Oak"--the name was immediately changed to "Jesus Oak." In French the statue was called "Our Lady in Hain." In 1650 a church was built. The trunk of the oak tree can still be seen behind the High Altar of this church.

In 1653 the pastor of Bellem received a piece of this oak tree and had a small statue of Our Lady made. The devotion to Our Lady spread far and wide. On the Feast of The Nativity of Mary, patron feast of the Church, people flock to the church to take part in a procession to the 15 chapels. This pilgrimage is called "Bellemuchtend" (The Morning of Bellem.) In 1944 German soldiers took possession of the church. Nothing was saved, not even the statue of Our Lady.

After the war the pastor of Bellem went to "Notre Dame au Bois" (Our Lady in Hain) to the "Jesus Oak", and this time received a small piece of the oak wood. He had carved the face and hands of Our Lady as well as the Christ Child. He dressed the statue in Flemish costume (the original costume was Spanish), and adorned it with jewels. This is the statue of Our Lady shown on the post-cancellation used at the Exhibition in Gent on May 31, 1962. (Translated from the German GABRIEL, Sept. 1962 issue.)

..submitted by Mr. & Mrs. F.H. Benjert..

PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR ADVERTISERS

OUR LADY OF THE WILD FERNS - (DUC ME LA-VANG) - South Viet Nam #193-6, July 7, 1962

Permission was obtained to extract the following from an article by Ruth Oswald which appeared in the January 1963 issue of "Our Lady of the Sacred Heart" Magazine.

The Republic of South Viet Nam issued this set of four stamps honoring the Blessed Virgin under the title "Duc Me La-Vang" (The Blessed Mother of La-Vang), the National Madonna of this land now undergoing intense communistic infiltration. This statue of Our Lady with the Divine Infant on her arm (depicted on the stamp against a background of bamboo trees) venerated at the La-Vang Shrine resembles that of Our Lady of Victories in Paris.

La-Vang acquired its name from the tall ferns, different from any others, which grew wild in a remote wooded valley in what was then Central Viet Nam. Today the site is just 20 miles from the artificial line at the 17th parallel devised by the Geneva Agreement of 1954, which cut Viet Nam in half. The northern half is controlled by the communists even though the people wanted nothing to do with communism. They had been tricked by lies and false fronts during World War II and the lengthy war with France which followed, eventually falling under communist control. A million or more refusing to live under communism gained sanctuary in South Viet Nam; this part of the country is about 90% Buddhist and 10% Christian, and most of the Christians are Catholics. These Catholics have great confidence in OUR LADY OF LA-VANG and feel she will protect them now just as she did back in 1798 when the three provinces surrounding the ancient city of Hue were subjected to intense persecutions of Christians.

La-Vang in 1798 was such a wild and remote area that even experienced foresters avoided the place because of the dense jungle growth which harbored all kinds of wild animals, including tigers. Because of its seclusion, and in spite of the dampness and wild animals, Christians considered the area an ideal place to hide during this persecution. Many felt it was better than death and better than prison where many Christians were put, and even though they could have saved themselves by renouncing their religion, they preferred the jungle. This is one of the great manifestations of faith the Christian world has to offer: Thousands of men, women and children ready to face starvation, disease and death rather than give up Christ. These refugees fought off the wild animals and lived as best they could off the land, but since little sunlight filtered through the tall protective trees, the dampness caused many diseases to break out. Yet they stayed, month after month, and each evening held communal prayer, reciting the rosary and appealing to Our Lady for help.

Thus it happened that one night as they prayed the rosary, a strange light appeared among the trees; it rose among the tall ferns and to the astonishment of the refugees, figures appeared: one was a beautiful woman with a child on her arm and she was accompanied by two angels carrying candles which gave light. The refugees recognized her as the Mother of God. She spoke to them and expressed sorrow at the illness among them and for their hardships, but advised them to accept these with joy as heaven was pleased by their sacrifice. Pointing to particular leaves near, she said "Take the leaves of these trees, boil them into a tea; it will cure your illness." She added that their prayers had been accepted and from that time on anyone who came there to pray would be heard and answered. After this promise the Blessed Mother disappeared among the trees, but it was not the last of her visitations.

The people followed Our Lady's instructions and survived. As peace was restored, news of the apparition spread and people came from all over Viet Nam to pray in the forest of the wild ferns. Even Buddhists built a little pagoda there. In 1820 the first chapel of Our Lady of La-Vang was built. So many people were cured on the site and so many prayers answered that larger and larger crowds converged on the Shrine, and this led to disaster. In 1885 new waves of persecution broke out against Christians in Viet Nam and the Shrine was completely destroyed; however, a year later the persecutionists were defeated, peace restored, and the work of rebuilding the Shrine and churches again undertaken. A new and larger Church of Our Lady of La-Vang was consecrated in 1901 by Bishop Gaspar who dedicated it under the title "Protecting Mother of the Faithful."